

Shanghai's LEED Fellow Alessandro Bisagni | Transcript

Introduction ([00:02](#)):

Welcome to Green Building Matters. The podcast that matters for green building professionals learn insight in green buildings as we interviewed today's experts in LEED and WELL. We'll learn from their career paths, war stories and all things green because Green Building Matters and now our host and yes, he has every LEED and WELL credential. Here's Charlie Cichetti.

Charlie ([00:33](#)):

Be sure to check out the Green Building Matters community where you can have unlimited exam prep for any of the professional credential exams you're tackling next, as well as putting your continuing education on autopilot, saving time with GBS reporting your hours on your behalf. Check it out. Gbes.Com/Join. Now enjoy this episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast. Welcome to the next episode of the Green Building Matters Podcast. I'm your host, Charlie Cichetti and I've got an Italian on here, a LEED Fellow, but he's actually in Shanghai. I just can't wait to learn his story and see what's kind of going on in the green building world there. Alessandro, how you doing today? I'm doing great. Thanks so much for having me, very exciting. I know as we're recording this, it's late evening where I'm at and early morning, where you're at. It's just amazing how we can connect our green building professionals here. Take us back. I always like to ask my podcast guests, Where did you grow up and where'd you go to school?

Alessandro ([01:32](#)):

I've grown up in quite a few different places. I was born in Italy and moved around in Italy a little bit as a kid. Eventually made my way to the UK and the United States kind of following my dad around. At the end of my high school, my dad was relocated to Hong Kong so I came here to Hong Kong, studying at an international school here called The Hong Kong International School. Believe it or not my senior year is when I was first introduced to sustainability. I had two wonderful professors that were teaching courses on environmental science and environmental philosophy, and that really opened up my mind. I immediately knew that that's what I wanted to do.

Alessandro ([02:27](#)):

That's what I wanted to study so it was really thanks to those two teachers that got me started in kind of this life journey. After graduating from there I was looking at universities that specifically had sustainability programs and I found Miguel in Montreal that had a relatively new school of environment. Without hesitation, I joined and went and started my four year university path towards sustainability that took me in quite different ways. I ended up doing another degree in urban planning, which then got me started thinking about green buildings. My senior thesis actually used LEED Canada as one of the tools for evaluation of green buildings as part of the thesis. So, that was the first time that I came across LEEDs.

Alessandro ([03:30](#)):

After graduating my parents were still in Hong Kong and I knew that Asia was really the future. And specifically China is where things were happening, especially in the sustainability world. I ended up getting a job in Shanghai. In less than a month after graduating university, I was on a plane to Shanghai and got a job working for a management consultancy firm that was also interested in exploring pathways to sustainability and environmental projects. Mainly looking at Italian investors and Italian investments coming in. I did that for about a year, and then we were hired at that company to assist in a banquet in Hong Kong for the launch of what was to be the world's first eco city. The famous eco city called Dongtan, which was spearheaded by Arup. It's a world famous engineering firm, and I had never heard of the project or Arup, at the time until we were hosting this banquet.

Alessandro ([04:40](#)):

Obviously, that's to say it was love at first sight, is an understatement. As soon as I learned about the project I had to be involved. I think I harassed everybody at Arup for a job until they finally gave me one. I started at Arup in 2007 hired out of Hong Kong, but stationed in Shanghai. I was able to stay in Shanghai during that time and I was working peripherally with Dongtan Eco City and a lot of the other eco city work. The master planners at Arup, at that time were literally defining what it meant to be an eco city and putting together multi-disciplinary practices that had never been done before. Building physics systems, working with urban planners, working with architects and MEP and structural. It was really quite tremendous to see and laid the foundation for what I did for the rest of my career.

Charlie ([05:38](#)):

A great green building career. I've got to ask a couple follow-up questions. There's so many good things there. First is that confidence, no hesitation to go to college, not just out of state, but out of country. Maybe moving around a little with your family growing up or it seemed like you had no hesitation to leave high school there in Hong Kong and go to Canada. Can you talk a little bit about that because I know sometimes when someone's going off to college it's tough to leave the house, go to another state in this case, you went pretty far. Tell us about that time in your life. Obviously, you had that aha for green, for sustainability, but what about just the confidence to go to school in another country?

Alessandro ([06:22](#)):

Well, I think, like you said, I mean, moving around for me was more the norm than anything else. Also here in Hong Kong, obviously there there's wonderful universities here, but I think I wanted to have an education elsewhere. I applied to many places in the US as well as England and Italy. Miguel just stood out as the best option in terms of the environmental program that they had. It's kind of growing up as a third culture kid, which is really what I am. It's kind of normal to have change and move.

Charlie ([07:00](#)):

Yeah, I admire that and you speak a couple of languages.

Alessandro ([07:05](#)):

Yes. I speak Spanish, Italian, English, and now Chinese.

Charlie ([07:11](#)):

It's amazing, man. It's amazing. The environmental side though, you had that early influence with the high school teachers, but was there anyone else that maybe opened a door for you or Alessandro, as you look back, maybe you'd call a mentor.

Alessandro ([07:26](#)):

I don't have anybody that I would call a mentor. Unfortunately, I think I was always kind of seeking and wanting a mentor, but really I kind of learned things on my own right. Failing and then learning and teaching myself after failing. I definitely did have people that helped me along the way. No doubt. I think probably the person that I would highlight the most is Grant Horsefield, who ended up being

my first client after I opened my company. I can tell you that story if you'd like? It's quite an interesting story. When I was working for Arup, this project came along, that Arup was evaluating called Naked Stables. Unlike what the name sounds, it's not a nudist resort or anything like that, but it is now one of the most sustainable hotels in all of mainland China.

Alessandro ([08:28](#)):

At the time, this was in 2008, 2009, well ahead of its time and Grant Horsfield and Delphine his wife, they started this concept of a luxury retreat. Where luxury is really nature. In Shanghai being engulfed in an urban landscape where we're to cross the city side to side, will take you hours and in between you're just looking at concrete. Having access to nature really is the fundamental definition of luxury. The word naked is really bearing your soul, bearing your soul and yourself to nature. Stripping everything behind and that was the concept of naked stables. It is this incredibly luxurious and remote eco resort about two hours outside of Shanghai. Obviously when I saw it again, I knew that I needed to be part of the project, but I didn't know the founder.

Alessandro ([09:32](#)):

I kind of stalked them on LinkedIn. I found someone that knew him and asked for a recommended connection. At the time I was very involved with Green Drinks, which is this, GO get together once a month to have sustainability professionals. I was involved in that Green Drinks community in Shanghai. I kind of lured him to a coffee under the pretense of participating or sponsoring a Green Drinks, but really my intention was to sell myself and also this company idea that I had. He felt that was hilarious that I kind of lured him into this. He basically hired me on the spot, which was amazing and that was the first project that allowed me to quit my job at Arup and kind of go off on my own.

Alessandro ([10:26](#)):

If it wasn't for that, who knows, I may have not been able to contribute and start this journey. I think I was incredibly spoiled because not only did I have this incredible start with this incredible person, but also it happened that after 11 years of running my company, that that project probably still is the most sustainable project that I've ever worked on. I got to work on it from the beginning which is rare in our field.

Charlie ([11:00](#)):

I think things happen for a reason and look at you now. Tell us a little more about what's keeping you busy today, your firm and the kind of work you're doing today.

Alessandro ([11:12](#)):

I started BEE Being Corporations in 2009. Originally the idea was to be a materials consultancy, a green materials consultancy that helps projects that were attempting for LEED certification. This is prior to WELL sourced materials in China. When I started the company the demand for LEED was tremendous in China at the time. Instead of focusing strictly on materials, I quickly had to pivot and focus on a full engineering service to assist these projects that we're seeking LEED certification, just like Naked Stables, which went on to become the first LEED platinum hotel in mainland China. And they came very quickly after that 2009, there was a very sharp rise in LEED. People and project owners wanted to differentiate themselves and LEED was really the best tool at the time and still is now.

Alessandro ([12:17](#)):

I quickly had to grow an engineering team that focused on building physics, MEP, Also materials consultancy, construction administration, basically all the services that you would need to follow along with a green building project. We did that for a few years and then started expanding quite a bit. The first project that I kind of got outside of the mainland was in Hong Kong, was another hotel here. A few years in, I started to work a lot in the retail space. Gucci came to me as the first client. At the time I really thought that that was going to be a one-off. I almost didn't really even consider it very seriously because I didn't expect luxury retail brands to be seeking LEED certification. Boy, I was I wrong. After Gucci, came another client and another client and another client and five or six years later after that first Gucci project we are now the world's largest consultancy focusing on luxury retail spaces. We've certified probably close to 400 retail stores in over 30 countries and counting, and it's helped us really expand geographically. We have 10 office locations from our original headquarters in Shanghai covering a very wide range of services, not only LEED anymore but also certifications such as WELL, which we worked on since the very beginning, Living Building Challenge, energy audits, a full suite of computer simulations. We recently started a technology division to do real-time tracking. I'll talk about that in a little bit.

Charlie ([14:08](#)):

Well, congratulations on your successes. I love entrepreneurship. I love green building entrepreneurship. I've spent a lot of time there myself and Alessandro, thanks for showing us that, "Hey, next thing you know you can really find one niche even within this green building world that just takes you really far." It seems like that's really helped you there with those luxury brands. It's great to see large companies really really doing better. It's one thing, if we wait on our country mandates, if we wait on our city mandates, it's another thing, if actual companies just have their own corporate sustainability beliefs. Let's look back on green building career and there might even be some personal wins in there, too you want to jump in with. If you look back on the highlight reel, what are a few things you're really proud of?

Alessandro ([15:03](#)):

Achieving LEED Fellow is without a doubt, one of the things that I'm most proud of, and especially, I think it was quite amazing that last year because I was nominated in 2020, I was the only one from from East Asia. There was one other gentleman from India that was nominated, but to be the only LEED Fellow from greater China, especially since there's so many incredible green building professionals, I think is very, very humbling. So, that one is tough to beat, but I think the other proudest achievement that I have is I certified the first version four project in the world. I got it in the finish line really just to the second. I was very heavily involved in the development of LEED for greater China.

Alessandro ([16:01](#)):

I started one of the first green building professional organizations called the GBPP that was meant to be a consortium for LEED professionals in China. At the time when I think I started in 2011 or 2012, there was a chapter, there was no affiliation with US GBC. At the time US GBC or GBCI didn't have an office in mainland China. While there were thousands of LEED APS throughout the country, there was no cohesion. We had no updates. Most of them wouldn't be able to travel to Greenbuild. The updates that were announced early at Greenbuild, didn't really get to us. I started this group with a few other green building professionals and it quickly grew to quite a decent size and became a focal point for this green building movement.

Alessandro ([16:58](#)):

We were invited to sit on what was the LEED international roundtable, which was composed of the 42 countries at its peak. We were contributing to the development of LEEDs and kind of tailoring it to the applicability of those various countries. We were doing it for Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China and Taiwan. Through that, I was given the opportunity to pilot version four and Hayworth, my client at the time, we were doing a new showroom for them in Beijing, inside Parkview Green, another incredibly sustainable building. I kind of just decided to apply version four without really telling the client and then told them later if it was successful. I started the application on their behalf and when I was secure enough that we could actually achieve it, I let them know.

Alessandro ([17:57](#)):

Luckily, that was successful. We were able to certify that project as the world's first version four. I remember at that next Greenbuild, which I believe was in San Francisco or Philadelphia. Everybody around the round table gave me a round of applause for kind of getting that first version four project. I just remember being so, so proud that we were able to do it and not only be the first, but to do it in China. The first version four project is in China, which I think is quite incredible.

Charlie ([18:39](#)):

That's a great story. Sometimes I had to fake out the client and then he got there. You got to cross the finish line. I love that. I love LEED Fellow. Anything else? I sometimes ask, do you have any favorite projects? You've got so many, it's hard to pick just one or two, right. Is there at least one more project you could highlight maybe something special?

Alessandro ([19:00](#)):

Yeah. There's another incredibly special project that I'm working on now. We've been working on it for the past two years and I'll probably be working on it for the next 10 years. It's called Song Saa Reserve, a small eco community. When I say small, it's over 600 acres, so let's say a small town located in Cambodia near the Angkor Wat Temple about 30 minutes North of the Croat temple. It's basically a self sustaining eco community that will be hospitality, residential retail, art space. It will generate its own energy on site. It will source its own groundwater and it is currently the largest living community challenge, vision plan, certified projects in the world. We'll go on to be the largest, fully certified Living Community Challenge Project at the end

Charlie ([20:10](#)):

You and your team bring up these potential programs to use, the frameworks to use. Is the client kind of almost familiar with it? How much because that's moving way past, "Hey, what else should we do? What is the right thing to do here?" How do those conversations go? Alessandro, give us a peek into those early developer conversations.

Alessandro ([20:35](#)):

Clients like Grants at Naked Stables and in this case, Malita Hunter, who's the developer of Songs Saa are rare clients. These are the clients that a consultant like me, you die to have because they're forward-thinking. They really understand how sustainability can be good for the project, not just for the bottom line, but for generations like Song Saa are generational projects. They're not building it just for them, they're building it for future generations. It's very rare to have a developer that has that foresight, but I think it's coming. With the case of Melita and Song Saa, I believe it was destiny for us to come together because I had first learned of Melita and the work that she was doing in Cambodia from a magazine.

Alessandro ([21:28](#)):

And this was probably two or three years prior to us working together. I don't know, maybe there's a trend of me stalking people online because I stalked Melita as well and somehow managed to figure out her email address and I reached out to her and I told her that what she was doing, she was working already in Cambodia, but had a private Island resort and high end luxury private Island resort in the South of Cambodia, very successful. I told her that what I thought she was doing was incredible and I'd love to find a way to work together. Unexpectedly, she replied, being the incredible person that she is and we started talking on and off over, over a few years and then lost touch.

Alessandro ([22:19](#)):

During that time, I ended up becoming a Living Building Challenge ambassador, and I relocated to Hong Kong where I'm actually, I live in Hong Kong now, but still travel up to Shanghai. I used to travel up to Shanghai all the time. She also lives in Hong Kong and she reached out to the IFI, international living futures Institute because she had found out about them and wanted to apply to the Living Community Challenge on this new project that she has. IFI reconnected us so completely unrelated to Melita and I's prior communication, IFI put us in touch

again. When we reconnected, we were like, "Okay it's destiny that we must work together. We started that and we developed this vision plan which got certified last year. It's just going to be one of those projects that's going to define hospitality for years to come.

Charlie ([23:21](#)):

Thank you for telling me stories. That's what the podcast is about to really get a peek into your journey and those stories, that determination, don't take "no" for an answer or, "Hey, why not?" Let's talk about the future. What's next. If you had a crystal ball Alessandro what should we be reading up on now, what's coming in this green building and healthy building movement?

Alessandro ([23:46](#)):

You said it and I think everybody's probably thinking the same thing that wellness is the new wave. I think it has been already for the past couple of years, but I think what I've seen in the past 12 months is just that the WELL building movement is on hyper-drive right now. The WELL building Institute, just positioned themselves very, very well in the market at the right time, probably with a little bit of luck thrown in there. I think that because of that, their product has skyrocketed. We're very lucky as a company because three years ago we made the commitment to become performance testing agents. At the beginning of 2020, we had very few performance testing projects that we've done because GBCI was basically still doing all of them and they were flying over here and doing all of them, but when COVID hits, GBCI couldn't fly.

Alessandro ([24:47](#)):

We ended up being the only performance testing agents available in greater China. So that was obviously a very positive boost to our testing business and then gave even more momentum to the WELL consultancy work that we do. We have some tremendous projects now that we're working on, including the world's largest WELL project, which is in Shanghai, being constructed right now, almost at pre-certification. Soon to be launched is the largest WELL portfolio project in Asia comprising 25 buildings, close to 20 million square feet of GFA. Looking at projects of this size really takes a different type of viewpoint because you're looking at an aerial view and how do you implement streamlined actions across multiple, multiple properties that literally have tens of thousands of people. In each one it's very different from working in an eco resort in a remote location in China.

Alessandro ([25:55](#)):

It takes a different mindset and approach. So this is a movement of wellness. I think as a trend that's only going to go up I think that in the office space, people are going to be treating offices very differently. They're going to be looking at space utilization differently and how we design those spaces to be more conducive to human health and wellness. I think it is incredibly important. The two trends, right? So I think the most important thing that I see is the element of technology and how technology is going to drive sustainability, both on the LEED and the WELL front. We've seen that already with the release of version 4.1 and ARC and the methodology behind real time performance and scoring. I think that's only going to improve as sensor technology gets better.

Alessandro ([26:55](#)):

We launched a technology division a few years ago as I saw this trend happening and I wanted to be at the forefront of it. When ARC was still called the Leader Dynamic Plaque, we launched this movement to deploy sensors that track real time, air quality water consumption, and energy consumption, to be able to report back to our clients about how our LEED activities during the design and construction actually resulted in the sustainable project. At the time, there was nobody that was doing that and the drive for that really came from our retail sector, because our typical retail contract doesn't consist of one or two stores, it's 30, 40, 50, sometimes a hundred locations. It became almost impossible for us to report back on that volume of projects without having some element of real time tracking.

Alessandro ([27:55](#)):

And that's the original motivation of why we did it. Sensor technology has evolved so much since then. I think that the simplicity of ARC, I think is a huge bonus, and I can see that growing tremendously as different scoring mechanisms are built within ARC. Also how the portfolio feature within ARC is developed. We've already started to do studies in ARC to compare different project type technologies and how the score in arc changes. And then that can drive change within the operations and facilities management of these portfolio companies. I think that that's an incredibly strong tool on the wellness front. I think indoor air quality monitors are only getting better. They're getting smaller, they're getting more accurate. You're able to track more pollutants, more accurately. The next thing is going to be real time, water quality monitoring, which we are piloting right now,

still, I think in the initial stages of what sensors can do, but I think that there's going to be much more that's going to be added on and then light and sound sound being a really interesting one because with air quality, we normally sample at five minute increments and we take half an hour.

Alessandro ([29:16](#)):

Our average is to be able to report back on a client, the trend, but with sound it's really different because an instance of sound can happen instantaneously in a millisecond. The reporting mechanism, fundamentally of how sound quality is inside a space needs to be completely defined from a software kind of like user interface, interface, point of view. These are the kinds of things that we're working on. What we're launching is a platform called BEE sense that is going to be able to look at all of these things in unison for clients to understand the performance of their project. At the same time report back to platforms such as world portfolio and ARC.

Charlie ([30:00](#)):

That's very innovative. That's where it's all going. And it's cool that you're out there also building some of it. One follow-up question. Reset and these IEQ real time monitoring devices, I'm based in Atlanta, Georgia. Normally Alessandro, going to travel a good bit, but maybe not right now here in the States where we're hearing a little bit about it, but I know that Reset is starting and more popular where you are there in Asia. Tell us about how important that is. What do we need to know about?

Alessandro ([30:34](#)):

I'm so happy that you asked about Eeset and I'm, and I'm even happier that you know what reset is and what it's all about. Taking a bit of a step back, because this is also a very interesting story. The founder of Resets is the very famous Raefer Wallis, who is an architect, and went to McGill University, went to my Alma mater, but we didn't know each other. We met on a school bus in Shanghai when I was still at Arup, going on a site visit for the Hayworth Furniture Factory, which was one of the first sustainable and LEED certified furniture factories in China. He sat behind me on a bus and we started chatting and found out that we both went to McGill at different times. At the time he was an architect focusing on sustainability and launched Giga, which is the organization behind Reset behind matter behind

many incredible innovations that have happened and they can look in the building world.

Alessandro ([31:35](#)):

I think that he's probably one of the most influential sustainability professionals in greater China, if not the world. He had been very interested in indoor air quality from the point of view of materials. How do materials impact indoor air quality? He was pushing healthy materials and then wanted to seal, so the result of indoor air quality, and as I think everybody knows in mainland China has an air quality problem. What people don't know is that almost everybody in China is an indoor air quality expert, probably more than anybody else around the world. It's an incredibly important subject to everybody, but there was still that disconnect of understanding what it means. There was no definition of how do you measure air quality? What is the definition of a good sensor and a bad sensor?

Alessandro ([32:30](#)):

How do you, how does a software platform relay that information and aggregate that information? All of these things were undefined. Rafer created Reset to be really a standard. Reset has three acts, three levels of certification. Most people don't know the first level is a monitor certification. It certifies monitors that have a certain level of accuracy. So it's a grade A grade B grade C grade B is really where we normally operate, which is a commercial grade sensor grade C would be a less accurate resentful sensor while a grade eight is a laboratory grade,ukind of calibration sensor. So grade B is where Reset focuses on. Then it also certifies software platforms. What is your data quality? How often are you reporting? How are you reporting it? How are you collecting that data from your monitors? If you are an accredited platform provider, that platform can then send data to Reset for project certification, which is the third kind of a standard that they do.

Alessandro ([33:34](#)):

So they set standards for projects as well for the air part of Reset, it's straightforward. If you have to pass air quality thresholds for a rolling three month average, and if you pass them, you are certified. If you fail one quarter, you have another quarter to improve. If you fail two subsequent quarters, then you are kind of downgraded to a non passing grade, but you still have the opportunity to, to basically recertify again. And because it was the first standard that described what sensors I should buy, how the, where I should put those sensors inside my space,

how that data is being collected and how it's being displayed. I think it took off tremendously and IFI Living Building Challenge, USGBC and LEED and IWOB and WELL have all kind of gone behind Reset and said, "Okay, you are the flagship standard for indoor air quality monitoring and standardization. So we're kind of follow you." There's a lot of crosswalks between all the three main certification bodies and more with Reset.

Charlie ([34:48](#)):

Thank you for walking us through that. No, one's really explained it here on the podcast. We need to, I mean, that's the world we're in, like you said, the healthy building movement was already happening before the pandemic. It is the next chapter to all of our listeners here. I promise you to have this green building movement and especially right now, when we have to build up confidence as people, reoccupy their buildings. Check out Reset. Alessandro, thanks for that quick education. I love it, man. Let's do a few more questions. These are kind of rapid fire questions about you. What would you say is your specialty or gifts? What are you really good at?

Alessandro ([35:20](#)):

I guess, working long hours? I think I say, I think as I mentioned, kind of not, not really having a mentor and starting this company from my living room that I've had to learn things the hard way lots of failures and lots of, lots of studying had to teach myself accounting. I had to teach myself basically everything. I think my particular expertise is I might not be the smartest guy in the room, but I'm definitely the hardest working guy in the room.

Charlie ([35:49](#)):

There's been some persistence. I've heard that throughout this podcast interview and also success attracts luck. I think you've been lucky a few times in there.

Alessandro ([35:59](#)):

Absolutely!

Charlie ([36:01](#)):

Any good habits ,routines you could share with us?

Alessandro ([36:04](#)):

Yeah. I mean, the COVID has helped with routines quite a bit, I would say, because I think similar to you chatting before the podcast started to travel was the primary thing that I did. My base is in Hong Kong, but I travel all the time. I went from 55 flights in 2019 to one in 2020. I think there was probably a lack of routine and then what I've discovered this, these past 12 months is that it's amazing to have an actual routine. Spending more time at home and actually working out regularly, segmenting out times when I should be doing more long-term projects versus short-term projects, which I never thought about before. It was whenever I could work, I would just work or if it was on an airplane and on a training or an office, I would just whenever I got a chance. I think having the routine is something that I actually recently discovered and it's something that I'll keep doing.

Charlie ([37:14](#)):

Thank you. No, I love it. Thank you for sharing that. Bucket list, Alessandro, I'm actually a fan of a bucket list. Not everybody is, but if you had one, what are one or two things maybe on the bucket list maybe some travel, some adventure. Maybe you want to write a book, who knows. What's on the bucket list?

Alessandro ([37:32](#)):

Skydiving is on the bucket list for sure. I tried it a few times and then logistically it didn't work out. Personally that's definitely on the bucket list. From the business front, I really love operating and doing green building work in emerging markets that people have never really thought about before. I opened an office in Alumba Tara Mongolia, which is almost finished with the country's first LEED project. And because that project really ended up opening the office and it's really incredible to be working in a market where there are no other people talking about green buildings. And so on the bucket list would be Africa. I would really like to try to explore that market further, obviously narrow down and try to figure out what to, what to do and where to focus on. I think that that kind of stuff really excites me

Charlie ([38:29](#)):

Really. Cool. Thank you books. Is there a book you'd recommend for the listeners?

Alessandro ([38:36](#)):

Most people have read, but what I'm reading now is Sapiens, a brief history of humankind. I think it gives you a lot of perspective about where we were and how far we've come.

Charlie ([38:47](#)):

We'll put a link to that and some of the other resources and cool projects that Alessandro has mentioned as we come to a close two questions remain. The one is, if you look back on your career, anything you wish you had known a little earlier in your career?

Alessandro ([39:01](#)):

Anything I wish I knew a little earlier? Well, I think in the beginning I was expecting, kind of coming out of four years of sustainability study in university. I was expecting every client to just be on the sustainability bandwagon. Be on the same wavelength as me. I think that that was a very harsh realization that most clients don't really pursue sustainability for the same reasons or maybe for the right reasons. However, you define that. I had a really big problem with that in the beginning. I had to learn to go along with it and understand that reasons why someone implements elements of sustainability and especially in our green building field, is not really important as long as consultants guide the project in the right direction. We are the ones that ultimately help them make an impact. So that took a little bit of a while to get used to.

Charlie ([40:08](#)):

Well, thank you. That's a great great advice. Sometimes we need to look back. My last question, let's say there's someone listening to this podcast who knows, maybe they're in Southeast Asia, but they know they want to jump in. If they're jumping in right now to what we call the green building movement, what words of encouragement do you have for them?

Alessandro ([40:27](#)):

Continue being an educator? I think that especially in more of the emerging markets in Asia, there's an incredible element of education that consistently needs to be done. And don't be discouraged if you have to continue doing it. I usually joke that I'm a 90% teacher, 10% engineer, but that's really true. I think that the sustainability and specifically greening healthy buildings has evolved so much from when I first started the company. Now just sitting down and speaking to a client with all the different options that are possible LBC, WELL, LEED, Reset, Sites, it can be incredibly confusing. Continue being an educator, continue being a student learning and then really just educate clients and then projects will come.

Charlie ([41:23](#)):

Wow, fantastic. This has been an incredible conversation. Everyone connects with Alessandro. Just an amazing story you told us. We're going to make sure we put your profile and just wanted to say, "Hey, keep up the great work and thank you for being with us on the podcast today". Thank you so much, Charlie. And thank everybody for listening. I just want to say thank you to our loyal listeners. We actually are celebrating over one year here on the Green Building Matters Podcast. Me and the entire team are stoked and just so glad you continue to listen every Wednesday morning to a new interview with a green building professional here in this industry, or just some pro tips that we want to make sure that you are getting straight from us straight to you.

Speaker 4 ([42:11](#)):

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